

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): Delegate Needle.

DELEGATE NEEDLE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent to make a style change in the amendment. The clause within the commas on lines 11 through 13, reading "is filed with the office of governor to refer to the voters the question of calling a constitutional convention" should be inserted after the comma on line 5.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): Line what?

DELEGATE NEEDLE: Line 5 of the amendment.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): Where does the comma go on line 5 then?

DELEGATE NEEDLE: The clause would be inserted after the comma which follows the word "petition". The clause would be within commas.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): The language you read would be transposed after the word "petition"?

DELEGATE NEEDLE: Yes.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): Does everyone understand that amendment?

Delegate Needle suggests as a matter of style that it should read "If a petition is filed with the office of Governor to refer to the voters the question of calling a constitutional convention"—, and then it provides, "signed by a number of qualified voters", et cetera.

Is there any objection to the modification?

Delegate Sybert.

DELEGATE SYBERT: I have objection, because it seems to me it should come after the comma in line 9. Then it will make sense.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): Does Delegate Needle wish to consider the matter further?

DELEGATE NEEDLE: Mr. Chairman, if there is any dispute about it, I would be perfectly willing to leave it to the Style Committee. It is strictly a style suggestion. Any way it goes it does not change the meaning at all.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): You adhere to your original amendment?

DELEGATE NEEDLE: Leave it the way it was originally stated, and leave to

the Style Committee to change, if they want to.

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): Will you speak to the amendment?

DELEGATE NEEDLE: This would write into section 10.03 the ability of the people by petition to call a constitutional convention. This amendment was offered to you on first reading and lost by a very slight margin. Since that time we have enacted certain provisions in the Constitution which may not be to the entire liking of all delegates, and perhaps now this amendment might be more acceptable. It is now very important, I think, to support this amendment, that is, initiative procedure on calling a constitutional convention, in view of the action of this body yesterday when it defeated initiative procedure for amendment of the Constitution.

Some persons have expressed a concern that we in this Constitutional Convention have taken some measure of government from the people. I do not agree with that, but here is an opportunity for those so concerned to give a large slice of government back to the people. A constitutional convention, the drafting of a constitution is the most basic exercise of sovereign right of the people. They should have the ability, I feel, to call the constitutional convention, in addition to the ability of the General Assembly to call that constitutional convention or place the question of calling a convention on the ballot. Remember that if the General Assembly does not do so, it will not be on the ballot but every twenty years. That is quite a period of time.

I feel that the people, the voters of this State, should have the ability within that period of time to place the question on the ballot. The mere filing of a petition does not call a constitutional convention. It only brings into action four steps: First, the filing of a petition which would require at least ten percent of those who voted in the most recent gubernatorial election, not more than one-fourth of any of them being from one county. The procedural requirements there are exactly twice as difficult as a referendum procedure, intentionally. Secondly, it only places the question on the ballot, and the voters then at the next election would have the opportunity to indicate if they want the calling of a constitutional convention.

Thirdly, an outstanding deliberative body I think such as ours would have an opportunity to determine whether or not there should be a revision of the constitu-